REMARKS

Applicants express appreciation to the Examiner for the interview granted to applicants' attorney.

In the Office Action (dated October 28, 2002) all of the original claims 1-32 were rejected. Claims 1-6, 8, 10, 23-29 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,115,709 to Gilmour et al. (hereinafter "Gilmour") and the remaining claims 7, 9, 11-22 and 30-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gilmour in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,178,419 to Legh-Smith et al. (hereinafter "Legh").[1]

By this paper, claims 1-5, 7, 11 and 24-27 have been amended, claims 12, 14, 18-23 and 28-32 have been cancelled, and new claims 33-37 have been added. Accordingly, claims 1-11, 13, 15-17, 24-27 and 33-37 are presented for reconsideration. Of these claims, claims 1, 11 and 37 are the independent claims at issue. Claim 1 is directed to a method for scoping a search of a data store, claim 11 recites a similar method for focusing a search of a data store, and claim 37 is directed to a corresponding computer-program product claim for implementing the method recited in claim 11.

Claim 1 defines a method for scoping the search of a data store that is performed to identify and return a desired subset of objects contained in the data store and to do so without accessing a corresponding property store. The method includes adding one or more identifiers in a content index whenever the content index is built and altered, identifying a first list of document identifiers from of the content index by using one or more search terms, identifying a second list of document identifiers from the content index by using one or more identifiers included in the context index, and comparing the second list against the first list to obtain a subset of document identifiers that can be returned without having to access the property store.

As noted in the specification, one benefit of the presently claimed method is that a search query can be performed on a data store in a focused manner, thus eliminating the need to filter each result against the property store. Accordingly, "[t]he extra processing time required to access the property store is therefore significantly reduced because the content index is much

[1] It will be appreciated that the changes made to the claims by this paper should not be construed as acquiescing in the purported prior art status of Gilmour or Legh under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(a)/(e). Accordingly, applicants reserve the right at any time, as deemed necessary or appropriate by applicants, to challenge the purported prior art status of Gilmour and Legh.

faster than accessing the property store." (p. 5, ll. 10-12). Even more particularly, "By including the scope restrictions [identifiers] in the content index, a search can quickly identify the relevant subset of messages without having to access the property store." (p. 8, ll. 19-20). "Another advantage of including the scope restrictions [identifiers] in the content index [] is that the user does not have to explicitly include the scope restriction in the search query." (p. 17, ll. 4-6).

Amended claim 11 is similar to claim 1, except that it replaces the act of comparing the first and second lists, recited in claim 1, with "a step for generating a subset list of document identifiers that are contained in both the first and second lists." Claim 11 also replaces the term "focusing" with the term "scoping" and replaces the term "identifiers" with the term "scope restrictions."

As noted during the Interview the applicants claimed method and computer program product are neither anticipated nor made obvious by Gilmour and Legh, either singly or in combination. In particular, neither reference recognizes or addressed the problem to which applicants' invention is directed at solving, e.g., scoping/focusing a search of a data store in order to identify and return a desired subset of objects contained in the data store(s) without accessing the property store of the corresponding system. Gilmour and Legh fail to disclose methods in which one or more identifiers/scope restrictors are added to a content index as it is built and altered, and in which two separate lists are identified, by using search terms and the identifiers/scope restrictors, and wherein the lists are compared to generate a subset of document identifiers that can be returned to a user without having to first access the property store of the corresponding system.

In contrast, Gilmour is directed at teaching a method and system for constructing knowledge profiles of users with unrestricted and restricted access portions according to respective levels of confidence of content to help determine which third parties will have access to the content. (Abstract). The method disclosed in Gilmour is generally directed at addressing existing problems with distributing knowledge resource content within an organization. Col. 1, ll. 26-32. The method disclosed in Gimour includes intercepting electronic documents that are generated and transmitted by users within the organization so that the terms of the documents can be extracted to construct user knowledge profiles. Col. 4, 62-67. "The identified terms are then compared to a number of user knowledge profiles with a view to detecting a predetermined degree of correspondence between the identified terms and any one of more of the user

knowledge profiles." Col. 5, ll. 41-45. "This aspect...is advantageous in that a sender of an e-mail message is presented with a list of proposed recipients, identified according to their knowledge profiles and the content of the e-mail message, who may be interested in receiving the e-mail message. Accordingly, the problems of over-distribution and under-distribution of e-mail messages may be encountered within an organization may be reduced." Col. 5, ll. 58-65.

Legh, on the other hand, is directed to a method for automatically creating a database of Internet location information that is based upon category headings. (Abstract). The system in Legh includes a processing platform that filters and scores web pages to determine which pages are most relevant for a particular search. (Abstract). In Legh, a list of keywords is generated for a plurality of categories in a database (Col. 5, ll. 3-8), then the keywords are passed to a plurality of search engines to obtain a list of results from which URLs are extracted. (Col. 5, 3-8, 15-16, 21-22). Thereafter, the URL lists are combined to remove duplicates, to cross-reference with the original categories, and to filter out undesired pages. (Col. 5, ll. 36-37, 45-50). Then, a second filtering step is performed to reflect an intended relevance of the pages and to indicate which pages will be placed in the database. (Col. 6, ll. 8-12).

As noted by the Examiner at the conclusion of the Interview, the amendment as exemplified by the amendment to claim 1 "on its face appears to the examiners to differentiate over the prior art of record." Thus, for at least the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are patentable over the prior art or record. In the event the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 28th day of April, 2003.

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